

**What is claimed is:**

1           1.       A communication method comprising the steps of:  
2           providing a user profile having a collection of properties related to a user email  
3 folder, the user profile further having a collection of properties related to a user instant  
4 messaging (IM) account;  
5           defining properties of the user email folder using the user profile; and  
6           defining properties of the user IM account using the user profile.

1           2.       The method of claim 1, wherein the step of providing the user profiles  
2 comprises the step of:  
3           assigning a user profile to a user;  
4           permitting the user assigned to the user profile to have access to the at least one  
5 user email folder associated with the user profile; and  
6           permitting the user assigned to the user profile to have access to the group email  
7 folder.

1           3.       A communication method comprising the steps of:  
2           assigning a user profile to a user;  
3           associating a user email folder with the user profile; and  
4           associating a user instant messaging (IM) account with the user profile.

1           4.       The method of claim 3, further comprising the step of:  
2           defining properties associated with the user email folder as a function of the user  
3 profile.

1           5.       The method of claim 4, wherein the step of defining properties associated  
2 with the user email folder comprises the steps of:  
3           assigning a user name associated with the user; and  
4           assigning a password associated with the user name.

1           6.       The method of claim 4, wherein the step of defining properties associated  
2 with the user email folder comprises the step of:  
3           assigning a user type associated with the user.

1           7.       The method of claim 4, wherein the step of defining properties associated  
2 with the user email folder comprises the step of:  
3           assigning a collection of email folders to the user.

1           8.       The method of claim 7, wherein the step of assigning the collection of  
2 email folders to the user comprises the step of:  
3           storing post office protocol 3 (POP3) server information for each email folder in  
4 the collection of email folders.

1           9.       The method of claim 7, wherein the step of assigning the collection of  
2 email folders to the user comprises the step of:  
3           storing simple mail transfer protocol (SMTP) server information for each email  
4 folder in the collection of email folders.

1           10.     The method of claim 4, wherein the step of defining properties associated  
2 with the user email folder comprises the step of:  
3           storing email filter settings.

1           11.     The method of claim 4, wherein the step of defining properties associated  
2 with the user email folder comprises the step of:  
3           storing an addressbook associated with the user.

1           12.     The method of claim 11, wherein the step of storing the addressbook  
2 associated with the user comprises the step of:  
3           assigning addressbook settings to the addressbook.

1           13.     The method of claim 3, further comprising the step of:  
2           defining properties associated with the user IM account as a function of the user  
3 profile.

1           14.     The method of claim 13, wherein the step of defining properties associated  
2 with the user IM account comprises the steps of:  
3           assigning a user name associated with the user; and  
4           assigning a password associated with the user name.

1           15.     The method of claim 13, wherein the step of defining properties associated  
2 with the user IM account comprises the step of:  
3           assigning a user type associated with the user.

1           16.     The method of claim 13, wherein the step of defining properties associated  
2     with the user IM account comprises the step of:  
3           assigning a collection of IM accounts to the user.

1           17.     The method of claim 13, wherein the step of defining properties associated  
2     with the user IM account comprises the step of:  
3           storing a contact list associated with the user.

1           18.     A communication system comprising:  
2           a user profile;  
3           a user email folder associated with the user profile; and  
4           a user instant messaging (IM) account associated with the user profile.

1           19.     The system of claim 18, wherein the user profile is configured to define  
2     properties associated with the user email folder.

1           20.     The system of claim 19, wherein the properties associated with the user  
2 email folder include at least one property selected from the group consisting of:

3           a user name;

4           a password;

5           post office protocol 3 (POP3) server information;

6           simple mail transfer protocol (SMTP) server information;

7           a collection of email folders;

8           a user type;

9           an email filter setting; and

10          an addressbook setting.

1           21.     The system of claim 18, wherein the user profile is configured to define  
2 properties associated with the user IM account.

1           22.     The system of claim 21, wherein the properties associated with the user IM  
2 account include at least one property selected from the group consisting of:

3           a user name;

4           a password;

5           a collection of IM accounts; and

6           a contact list.